

# John Lydus and His Contemporaries on Identities and Cultures of Sixth-Century Byzantium

SVIATOSLAV DMITRIEV

*To the memory of Angeliki Laiou*

The age-old debate about whether Justinian's empire (527–565) was a continuation of the Roman empire or a new civilization with specific attributes has never been resolved successfully. It may never be. Many apply the label "Byzantine" to the eastern Roman empire as early as the reign of Constantine the Great (which has become the starting point of almost all general surveys of Byzantine history); some are inclined to begin the history of Byzantium in the fifth century;<sup>1</sup> still others have pegged the beginning of Byzantine history on the reforms of the emperor Heraclius in the early seventh century. Such expressions as "late antiquity" and "the protobyzantine period," which came into regular

scholarly use but have failed to acquire clear and universally accepted definitions, reflect the same situation. This debate is probably not even as important as some might think. However, the problem of the nature of Justinian's empire, politically and culturally, remains. How did the Byzantines (as we will call Justinian's contemporaries for the sake of convenience) connect themselves with Roman history and culture? Works from Justinian's age either dealt with various aspects of Roman civilization or relied directly on Roman learning. The *Codex Iustinianus* comprises excerpts, in Latin, from Roman lawyers of the imperial period. Histories by Procopius of Caesarea, Agathias, and Menander Protector make numerous references or allusions to the Roman past.<sup>2</sup> Other contemporaneous works display a close affinity of the Byzantines for Roman civilization: the so-called *Strategikon of Maurice* (dated generally, though not by all, to the sixth century), while shifting the military's emphasis to cavalry tactics, showed that Latin continued to dominate military life,<sup>3</sup> whereas

✦ The following editions of John Lydus's works have been used: *Ioannis Lydi Liber de mensibus*, ed. R. Wünsch (Leipzig, 1898); *Ioannis Laurentii Lydi Liber de ostentis ex codicibus italicis auctus et calendaria graeca omnia*, ed. C. Wachsmuth (Leipzig, 1863); *Des magistratures de l'état romain*, ed. M. Dubuisson and J. Schamp, 2 vols. (Paris, 2006). English translations from *On Powers* are those of *On Powers, or, The Magistracies of the Roman State*, ed., trans., and comm. A. C. Bandy (Philadelphia, 1983), with occasional modifications; translations from other books of Lydus are mine. Some of these ideas were presented at the conference Identity and Identification in Antiquity (Florida International University, Miami, 7–9 April 2009). I am indebted to its organizers, H. Ziche and H. Travis, for their kind invitation. This article has profited from comments by two anonymous referees and the editor.

1 E.g., F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408–450)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2006), 4. See also a special emphasis on the fifth century in G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974).

2 E.g., Procop., *Wars* 1.18.34, 7.1.21–24, etc.; Agath. 1.1.1, 7, 1.2.3, 1.8.1, etc.; *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool, 1985), frags. 6.1, 15.5, 16.1, 22, 24, 25.1, etc.

3 *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. T. Dennis and E. Gamillscheg (Vienna, 1981). See T. G. Kolias, "Tradition und Erneuerung im frühbyzantinischen Reich am Beispiel der militärischen Sprache und Terminologie," in *L'armée romaine et les barbares*, ed. F. Vallet and M. Kazanski (Paris, 1993), 39–44 and B. Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec* (Brussels, 1997), 143 (with nn. 354–55).

the *Christian Topography*, or *Cosmography*, by Cosmas Indicopleustes, while a perfectly Christian text, still glorifies “the empire (βασίλεια) of the Romans” in that it “transcends every other power, and will remain unconquered until the final consummation, for he says that *it shall not be destroyed for ever*.”<sup>4</sup>

Did the people of Justinian’s empire consider themselves to be living in the Roman world? And what was their understanding of the meaning of “Roman”? It is clear that Justinian’s contemporaries saw the past and antiquity as separate from their own times.<sup>5</sup> But how far off did this chronological frontier lie? Raising such questions is important not only for methodological and chronological considerations; it also gives us a better view of the culture of Justinianic Byzantium, since identity forms the basis of any culture.

Works on identity in late antiquity have focused largely on “barbarian identity,” by pointing to various dividing lines between “Romans” and “barbarians” around the sixth century. Thus, Patrick Amory, who has defined identity as an “individual’s allegiance to a community, as manifested in behavioral and cultural traits,” has spoken of identity by ethnicity, ideology, religion, profession, region, and status, even as he accepted the limitations of each criterion.<sup>6</sup> Others have singled out religious beliefs as a means of (self-)identification.<sup>7</sup> Other studies have noted the distinct legal status of “barbarians,” as opposed to that of “Romans.”<sup>8</sup>

Relatively few works have examined “Roman identity” in that period. Among others, Geoffrey Greatrex has asserted that “a fundamental definition of a Roman in the empire of Justinian was that of loyalty to the emperor.”<sup>9</sup> However, the members of circus factions who threw away their loyalty to Justinian during the Nika Revolt did not cease to be Romans. Greatrex’s examples of the loyalty that was claimed by or forced on military contingents are also easily disproved. Military personnel have always been expected to maintain loyalty to the ruler of the state, irrespective of whether this ruler was the “Roman emperor” or the state was the “Roman empire.” The fact is that having barbarians in Byzantine armies swear loyalty to the emperor turned them into Roman soldiers, but it did not make them Romans in cultural terms. Nor did the soldiers have to be of the same ethnic background as the emperor: Roman armies swore their loyalty to Zeno, who was *natione Isaurus*.<sup>10</sup> We encounter numerous references to the Roman army of the sixth century as being composed of various ethnic groups. In the words of Procopius, Belisarius both referred to himself as a commander of Roman troops (ὕπ’ ἐμοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγούντος) and noted that there was a multitude of barbarians in his army (βάρβαροι πολλοί μοι τὸ πλῆθος ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ εἰσιν).<sup>11</sup> Count Marcellinus talks of Mundo the Gepid, who was then the master of both Illyrian military units, as the first of “Roman commanders” to challenge the Goths.<sup>12</sup> Listing the

4 Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, ed. W. Wolska-Conus, 3 vols. (Paris, 1968–1973), 1:389, 2:74 (ἥτις εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα οὐ διαφθαρήσεται). See *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian monk*, trans. J. W. McCrindle (New York, 1897), 71 (Book 2) and 72–73: “though, by way of chastisement for our sins, hostile barbarians rise up for a short while against the Roman dominion (*Romania*), yet by the valour of him who governs us the empire (*basileia*) will continue to be invincible.”

5 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8, 1.20, 1.40 (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ νῦν), 2.1, 3.1, 3.5, 3.10, 3.22, 4.23, 4.51, 4.71, 4.152; *De mag.* pr.6, 1.6, 1.16, 1.17, 1.21, 1.31, 1.36, 1.37, 1.42, 2.3, 2.9, 2.16, 2.19 (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ νῦν), 2.22, 2.26, 2.29, 3.1, 3.3, 3.11, 3.15, 3.27, 3.35, 3.64, 3.67, 3.68; *De ost.* 4.4, 4.6.

6 Ethnicity: P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy: 489–554* (Cambridge and New York, 1997), 14–18, 317; ideology and religion: 316, 274–76; profession, region, or status: 26–33.

7 E.g., J. Harries, “Legal Culture and Identity in the Fifth-Century West,” in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. S. Mitchell and G. Greatrex (London, 2000), 45.

8 E.g., J. Matthews, “Roman Law and Barbarian Identity in the Late Roman West,” in Mitchell and Greatrex, *Ethnicity and Culture*, 31–44; Harries, “Legal Culture,” 45–57.

9 G. Greatrex, “Roman Identity in the Sixth Century,” in Mitchell and Greatrex, *Ethnicity and Culture*, 268, 274: “Clearly, then, loyalty to the emperor was the determining factor as to who was Roman and who was not in the sixth century,” followed by A. Rodolff, “Procopius and the Vandals: How the Byzantine Propaganda Constructs and Changes African Identity,” in *Das Reich der Vandalen und seine (Vor-)Geschichten*, ed. G. M. Berndt and R. Steinacher (Vienna, 2008), 242.

10 *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH *AA* 5.1 (Berlin, 1882), 44. Cf. Procop., *Wars* 3.7.18.

11 Procop., *Wars* 5.9.27. Barbarians in Justinian’s armies: J. Maspero, “Φοιδεράτοι et Στρατιῶται dans l’armée byzantine au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *BZ* 21 (1912): 97–109; J. L. Teall, “The Barbarians in Justinian’s Armies,” *Speculum* 40 (1965): 294–322; G. Ravegnani, *Soldati di Bisanzio in età giustiniana* (Rome, 1988), 26–28 (with notes), 93–95; M. Whitby, “Recruitment in Roman Armies from Justinian to Heraclius (ca. 565–615),” in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. 3, *States, Resources, and Armies*, ed. Av. Cameron (Princeton, 1995), 103–10, 120.

12 Marcellini *V. C. Comitibus Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH *AA* 11 (Berlin, 1894), 103; Mundo *Illyricanae utriusque*

senators sent by Justinian to defend eastern frontiers against the Persians, Malalas mentions the patrician Pompeius, who led a large force, as being in command over the Illyrians, Scythians, Isaurians, and Thracians. In the end, continues Malalas, the war was ended by an agreement between “the Romans and the Persians.”<sup>13</sup> Alongside the Isaurians, Procopius’s *Wars* likewise includes among “Roman soldiers” the Saracens (1.18.5); the Illyrians, under the command of a Massagete and a Thracian (7.30.6); the Lycaonians (1.18.40); the Cappadocians (5.29.20); and the Thracians (6.5.1, 6.11.5, 6.12.26–27). Probably the biggest such group was “the people of the Isaurians” (τὸ Ἰσαύρων ἔθνος).<sup>14</sup> They, like the others, remained ethnically distinct from the Romans<sup>15</sup> yet still formed a part of the Roman army.<sup>16</sup> References to the Isaurians in general, as in the episodes marked by Count Marcellinus,<sup>17</sup> and individually, as in

*militiae ductor dudum Getis Illyricum discurantibus primus omnium Romanorum ducum incubuit* (s.a. 530). For this Mundo: *PLRE* 2:767–768 and 3:903–905 (probably a different person, however).

13 Malal. *Chron.* 18.26, in *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 2000), 369.

14 Procop., *Secr. Hist.* 6.5.

15 E.g., Procop., *Wars* 5.5.2, 5.9.11–19, 7.6.2, etc. Cf. A. Kaldellis, “Classicism, Barbarism, and Warfare: Prokopios and the Conservative Reaction to Later Roman Military Policy,” *AJAH*, n.s., 3–4 (2008): 212 n. 52 (my italics): “It seems that Prokopios did not even consider the Isaurians to be fully Roman.”

16 Procop., *Wars* 5.28.23, 5.29.45, 6.7.1–10, 6.7.17, 6.12.6, 6.27.7, etc.

17 Marcell., in Mommsen, ed., *Chronicon* (n. 12 above), 80 (s.a. 441), 94 (s.a. 492). Cf., e.g., E. Chrysos, “The Roman Political Identity in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium,” in *Byzantium: Identity, Image, Influence; XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, University of Copenhagen, 18–24 August, 1996*, vol. 1, *Major Papers*, ed. K. Fledelius (Copenhagen, 1996), 14: on “cultural and social peculiarities” of the Isaurians, while denying that “this part of the empire was politically less ‘Roman’ than anyone else,” and Greatrex, “Roman Identity” (n. 9 above), 269: “The Isaurian *ethnos*, against which the Romans had been engaged in bitter warfare in the 490s, was nonetheless Roman,” and (the next sentence) “Isaurian troops, however, remained sufficiently distinct from other imperial forces during the reign of Justinian that they appear to have operated in their own units,” with N. Lenski, “Assimilation and Revolt in the Territory of Isauria, from the 1st Century BC to the 6th Century AD,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999): 413–65; H. Elton, “Illus and the Imperial Aristocracy under Zeno,” *Byzantion* 70 (2000): 393–94 (with a collection of opinions and bibliography), 405 (“Illus was an Isaurian, but he had other identities too,” with reference, in particular, to Illus’s political standing as a “Roman aristocrat”); and K. Feld, *Barbarische Bürger: Die Isaurier und das römische Reich* (Berlin and New York, 2005), 340–41.

the cases of the emperor Zeno and Longinus, who was “a Roman general, an Isaurian by birth,”<sup>18</sup> further serve to illustrate a distinction between cultural, or ethnic, and political identities in sixth-century Byzantium.

Roman identity appears to have been flexible. Thus, loyalty to the emperor turns out to be insufficient, on its own, for defining one’s (Roman) identity. Nor was the loyalty undivided: while some Isaurians rebelled against Zeno, others stood up in defense of his imperial power.<sup>19</sup> And although loyal to the emperor Zeno, the Isaurians would be massacred by the people of Constantinople, who were no less “Roman” than their emperor, and who turned out to be disloyal to Zeno.<sup>20</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, while pointing to the danger of “fall[ing] back on the formal (military) criterion of ‘loyalty to the emperor,’” has asserted that “what makes Prokopios a Roman despite his disloyalty to the emperor was his devotion to the idea of the Roman commonwealth, something most barbarians in the army lacked.”<sup>21</sup> But what exactly constituted the “Roman commonwealth” in the sixth century? And did the people in Rome and Constantinople contemplate it in the same terms even if, at the very least, they spoke different languages and did not understand each other?

In the end, both the studies of “Roman identity” in late antiquity and those dealing with “barbarian identity” turn out to operate from the same premise: a line, even if fine, can be drawn between “Romans” and “barbarians.” Hence Chrysos has spoken of “overlapping (Roman) identities,” whereas Amory, offering a pluralistic approach to “barbarian identity,” has outlined “Roman identity” in a similarly diverse fashion.<sup>22</sup> But the fluidity of Roman identity was much more complex, because the “Romans” themselves differed in their identity and their culture. According to Procopius, in the speech before the army prior to the march on Carthage, Belisarius spoke of the Libyans as “Romans from of old,” thus similarly distinguishing

18 Procop., *Build.* 3.6.23 (Ρωμαίων στρατηγός, Ἰσαυρος γένος). For Zeno, see n. 10 above.

19 Elton, “Illus,” 398–99; Feld, *Barbarische Bürger*, 245–77.

20 The massacre of the Isaurians by the people of Constantinople in the 470s: Candidus, frag. 1 = Phot. *Bibl.* 79 = *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. R. C. Blockley, 2 vols. (Liverpool, 1981–83), 2:464 and 466, frag. 1.

21 Kaldellis, “Classicism” (n. 15 above), 209 n. 50.

22 Chrysos, “Identity” (n. 17 above), 7 (with n. 2); Amory, *People and Identity* (n. 6 above), 520; cf. n. 6 above.

between their cultural and political identities.<sup>23</sup> The situation with the Italians turns out to have been quite similar, as Procopius illustrates with a reference to the Neapolitans, who were held to be “Romans” during their negotiations with Belisarius, whereas Totila praised them as the most loyal to him among the “Italians” (which surely reflected the Byzantine perception, as we shall see below).<sup>24</sup> From different perspectives, a Libyan or an Italian could be qualified as either a Roman or not. Defining “Romans” simply by separating them from “barbarians”—or defining “Romanity” by excluding “barbarity” in some particular field(s) of activity—thus fails to embrace all the nuances of this definition. What is missing in modern studies is the cultural aspect of Roman identity: one’s “allegiance to a community” is better demonstrated by a person’s cultural and social preferences than by his loyalty to the leader or community in a general sense. The task of this article is to approach the problem of Roman identity in the sixth century, not by setting “Romans” and “barbarians” side by side, but by juxtaposing the cultural identity of the Byzantines to that of the Romans.<sup>25</sup>



We have a wealth of background information for this task provided by several contemporary and near-contemporary sources, including the works of John Lydus, an official whose career in the imperial administration spanned almost the entire first half of the sixth century.<sup>26</sup> Lydus is known primarily as the author of three surviving works. Arranged in chronological order, as far as it can be established,<sup>27</sup> these are *On Months*

(about the Roman calendar and festive days); *On Portents* (about the ways different peoples, including the Romans, perceived various natural and astrological phenomena and understood them to affect the future); and *On Powers* (about the origins and development of the ancient Roman political organization and state administration, and their gradual transformation into the administrative system in which Lydus himself occupied various positions during his bureaucratic career). Since he was a member of the intellectual and bureaucratic élite of Justinian’s empire, and since his works were written for his learned contemporaries (many mentioned by name), Lydus presumably held views that were representative of a large portion of the Byzantines who administered the empire. Even a quick glance shows that all of Lydus’s surviving works establish various connections between his times and the Roman past. For this reason, he has often been considered an antiquarian,<sup>28</sup> even though scholarly opinions have varied when explaining Lydus’s purposes in uncovering ancient knowledge. Some see him as collecting information about the past, because of his interest in tracing the ancient Roman roots of contemporary institutions.<sup>29</sup> Others think of him as attempting to use the knowledge of the past to influence the opinion of his contemporaries.<sup>30</sup> Regardless of whether Lydus merely traced the ancient Roman

23 Procop., *Wars* 3.16.3 (οἱ Λίβυες, Ῥωμαῖοι τὸ ἀνέκαθεν ὄντες); see also 3.20.19.

24 Procop., *Wars* 5.8.7, 5.9.27, and 7.7.12.

25 Works examining the cultural separation between Byzantium and the west have focused largely on later times, whereas those dealing with the early Byzantine period are concerned, for the most part, with political issues; see, e.g., J. Koder, “Byzantinische Identität—einleitende Bemerkungen,” in Fledelius, *Byzantium: Identity, Image, Influence* (n. 17 above), 4–5 and Chrysos, “Identity,” 7–16, respectively.

26 For a recent summary of Lydus’s life and career: W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (New York, 2007), 258–61.

27 Opinions vary on the chronological order of Lydus’s works. Whereas Photius mentioned them as *De ostentis*, *De mensibus*, and *De magistratibus* (Bibl. cod. 180), most modern authors have put *De mensibus* before *De ostentis*: e.g., T. Wallinga, “The Date of Joannes

Lydus ‘De magistratibus,’” *RIDA*, 3rd ser., 39 (1992): 360 (and n. 3 with further references); M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London and New York, 1992), 10; L. M. Whitby, “Lydus (John the Lydian),” *OCD*<sup>3</sup>, 899; D. Roques, “L’historiographie protobyzantine (IVe–VIIe siècle) et les fragments des historiens grecs de Rome,” *Ktéma* 29 (2004): 242; A. C. Bandy, “Introduction,” in *On Powers* (unnum. n. above), xxvii; M. Dubuisson and J. Schamp, “Introduction générale,” in *Des magistratures* (unnum. n. above), 1.1: lxxix–cxv. The order of Lydus’s works is irrelevant to the conclusions made in this article.

28 E.g., Av. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), 244; Maas, *John Lydus*, 53–56; P. McKechnie, in *Scholia*, n.s., 2 (1993): 133.

29 See M. Dubuisson, “Jean le Lydien et le latin: Les limites d’une compétence,” *Serta Leodensia secunda* (Liège, 1992), 125: “Grammaticus avant tout.”

30 E.g., Maas, *John Lydus*; M. Dubuisson, “Jean le Lydien et les formes de pouvoir personnel à Rome,” *Cahiers Gustave Glotz* 2 (1991): 55–72; J. Vanderspoel, in *BMCR* 1992 (03.03.10); A. Kaldellis, “Republican Theory and Political Dissidence in Ioannes Lydos,” *BMGS* 29 (2005): 1–16; C. Pazdernik, “Justinianic Ideology and the Power of the Past,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, ed. M. Maas (Cambridge, 2005), 194–98.

roots of contemporary institutions or exposed ancient learning to enlighten his contemporaries (and both opinions could, in fact, be correct), the use of the past for the sake of the present implies a certain relationship between them. The Roman past not only continued into Lydus's times, as we have seen above, but also defined the culture and identity of his contemporaries. But in order to connect with that Roman past, they needed to distinguish it from their present, which, therefore, also implied drawing distinctions between different identities and cultures of the sixth century. That is, as we shall see, Lydus and his contemporaries referenced the past or antiquity as a period separate from their own times,<sup>31</sup> and distinguished—in cultural, social, and administrative terms—between Byzantium and the Latin-speaking western Mediterranean.

Starting with definitions, our first point of investigation is to see what “Romans” and “Roman” meant to the people of the Justinianic empire. At first glance, the use of these terms in Byzantine sources of the Justinianic period appears to have been inconsistent. But we need to pay attention to the context in which they were used, including the kinds of linguistic analysis and numerous philological explications that John Lydus offered to his readers. It is well known that he provided erroneous, and often spectacularly fantastic, explanations on many occasions. Whether he did not know Latin well enough, misinterpreted his Latin sources, or was using secondary sources from which he borrowed both information and (false) opinions, is irrelevant to our purpose.<sup>32</sup> What matters is that, in such cases, his “Romans” were the people who spoke and wrote Latin, whether in the past or in Lydus's own time. In practical terms, his “until now the Romans say,” “the Romans still today call,”<sup>33</sup> or simply “the

Romans call,”<sup>34</sup> referred only to the people who spoke the language of the Romans, i.e., Latin.

A similar observation follows from labels for the authors whose works Lydus claimed to have used in his writings. Many scholars have already addressed the problem of the number of Lydus's sources, and whether he actually utilized every source he mentions.<sup>35</sup> But no attention seems ever to have been paid to what he called the authors of such texts. He openly marks as “Roman” the following authors: Apuleius (*De ost.* 10b; *De mag.* 3.64), Asper (*De mag.* 1.7), Campestris (*De ost.* 9c), Capito (*De mag.* pr.), Catilina (*De mag.* 1.47), Cato the Elder (*De mag.* 1.2, 1.47), Celsus (*De mag.* 1.47, 3.33), Cincius (*De mens.* 4.64 and 86), [Cassius] Dio (*De mens.* 4.2), Fenestella (*De mag.* 3.74), Figulus (*De ost.* 27 tit.), Fonteius (*De mens.* 4.169; *De ost.* 39 tit.; *De mag.* pr., 2.12, 3.42), Frontinus (*De mag.* 1.47), Juvenal (*De mag.* 1.20), Laberius (*De mag.* 3.63), Lucan (*De mag.* 3.46), Lulilius (*De mag.* 1.41), [Cornelius] Nepos (*De mag.* 3.63), Nigidius (*De ost.* 7), Numenius (*De mens.* 4.80), Ovid (*De mens.* 4.2), Paternus (*De mag.* 1.9, 1.47), Persius (*De mag.* 1.19, 1.32), Pliny the Elder (*De mens.* 4.53; *De ost.* 7), Renatus (*De mag.* 1.47), Sammonicus (*De mag.* 3.32), Sisenna (*De mag.* 3.74), Titinius (*De mag.* 1.40), Varro (*De mens.* 4.53; *De ost.* 10b; *De mag.* pr. and 1.2, 2.13), Virgil or “the Roman poet” (*De mag.* 1.7, 1.12, 1.25, 1.34), and Vitellius (*De ost.* 54).

Lydus labels some of these people “Roman” in a few places, but omits this label for those we would consider Roman. For example, *On Portents* marks Varro, Nigidius, and Apuleius as “Romans,” before referring to the opinion of Campestris, who is mentioned solely by name.<sup>36</sup> In a similar fashion, the preface to *On Powers* calls Capito, Fonteius, and Varro “Romans” and then mentions Sallust, who receives no such description. Further in the same text, Lydus names the “Roman philosopher Apuleius” together with Sallust (again without any designation), and refers to Fenestella and Sisenna as “Romans,” while omitting this label for

31 See n. 5 above.

32 E.g., Dubuisson, “Jean le Lydien et le latin,” 123–31 and idem, “Jean le Lydien et les formes de pouvoir,” 56–57; B. Baldwin, “John Lydus in Latin on Augustus,” *Byzantion* 65 (1995): 527 n. 2; T. G. Kolias, “Ioannes Lydos und die Diskuswerfer,” in *Φιλῆλλον: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, ed. C. N. Constantinides et al. (Venice, 1996), 175–78. See, however, D. Cloud, “A Pattern of Error in Ioannes Lydus: The Parricide Question,” in *Mélanges de droit romain et d'histoire ancienne: Hommage à la mémoire de A. Magdelain*, ed. M. Humbert (Paris, 1998), 91–108. In general: Rochette, *Le latin* (n. 3 above), 253–54 (with nn. 166–67), 274 n. 67.

33 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8, 1.28, 3.10; *De mag.* 1.16, 1.35.

34 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.7, 1.8, 1.12, 1.21, 1.24, 1.28, 1.29, 1.30, 2.4, 2.7, 3.7, 4.1, 4.4, 4.7, 4.15, 4.26, 4.29, 4.30, 4.73, 4.100, 4.110, 4.111, 4.158, 4.171, 4.172, 4.173, 4.174. Lyd. *De mag.* 1.8, 1.10, 1.23, 1.32, 1.35, 1.42, 1.46, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.13, 2.30, 3.20, 3.23, 3.35, 3.37, 3.59.

35 E.g., Maas, *John Lydus* (n. 27 above), 119–37; Roques, “L'historiographie protobyzantine” (n. 27 above), 242–43 (who counts 210 to 220 authors whose works Lydus claimed to have used).

36 Lyd. *De ost.* 10b.

Varro, whom he mentions in the same sentence.<sup>37</sup> It is clear, however, that Campestris, Sallust, and Varro were Romans, judging both by the time in which they lived and their use of Latin (Lydus labels Campestris and Varro as “Roman” elsewhere). Why Lydus applied “Roman” in this fashion remains unclear. It could well be that he simply borrowed this label, along with personal names, from his (Greek) sources before turning to another source—written either in Greek or Latin—which gave only the person’s name. So, for example, Lydus could either call Varro “Roman” or mention him side by side with the “Romans”; likewise he could refer to Virgil as either the “Roman poet,” seemingly an established label among Byzantine authors of that time, or solely by name.<sup>38</sup> But even if this supposition is correct, it would only confirm the idea that Lydus’s views reflected those of his contemporaries. The fact remains that of Lydus’s thirty-one “Roman” authors, twenty-nine wrote in Latin. Other than the two explicable exceptions (Cassius Dio and Numenius),<sup>39</sup> Lydus never refers to any author who wrote in Greek as “Roman.” He juxtaposes “Roman authors” to Greeks on many occasions, as, for example, when he discusses the meaning of the word *adoratores* in *On Powers*: “[T]hey call those who have grown old in arms *veterani*. Attestors are both Celsus and Paternus, and Catiline, not the conspirator but another, and the first Cato before them, and Frontinus, after whom also Renatus—all Romans; and of the Greek writers, Aelian and Arrian, Aeneas, Onesander, Patro, Apollodorus in his *Siege Engines*,

37 Lyd. *De mag.* pr. 3 (Καπίτων καὶ Φοντήϊος, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ὁ διδασκαλικώτατος Βάρρων, Ῥωμαῖοι πάντες, μεθ’ οὓς Σαλλούστιος οὗτος), 3.64 (ὡς Ἀπολήϊος ὁ Ῥωμαῖος φιλόσοφος κτλ. καὶ Τράγκυλλος δὲ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ περὶ ἐπισήμων πορνῶν ἀνενηγόχασιν), and 3.74 (ὡς Φνεστέλλας καὶ Σισέννας οἱ Ῥωμαῖοί φασιν, ὧν τὰς χρήσεις ὁ Βάρρων [ἐπὶ] τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ἀνήγαγεν).

38 The “Roman poet”: Lyd. *De mag.* 1.7, 1.12, 1.25, 1.34; cf., e.g., Malal. *Chron.* 6.19 (126 Thurn ed.; see n. 54 below). By name: *De mag.* 1.50.

39 Lydus mentions Dio twice, as “Dio” in *De mens.* 4.2 and as “Cocceius” in *De mag.* 1.7, thus likely having used different sources. He had probably never seen the text of Dio’s *Roman History* and could well think that it was in Latin. As for Numenius, Lydus mentions him four times, all in *On Months* (*De mens.* 4.53, 4.80, 4.86, frag. 6). While he calls him “Roman” in 4.80, Lydus also mentions Numenius alongside (i.e., not as part of) “the Romans” the next time he refers to his name: 4.86 (ὅτι ὁ Ἡφαιστος, ὡς φησι Νουμήνιος, γόνιμον πῦρ ἐστίν, ἡ τοῦ ἡλίου ζωογονικὴ θερμότης· διὸ δὴ καὶ χυλὸν ποιοῦσι τὸν Ἡφαιστον κτλ. ὁ δὲ παρὰ Ῥωμαῖοις Κίγκιος λέγει, χυλὸν τῷ πόδε τὸν Ἡφαιστον λαμβάνεσθαι διὰ τὸ ἀνίσον τῆς ἡλίου πορείας).

after whom Julian the emperor in his *Military Engines*, etc.” Further on in the same text, while describing a precious fish, Lydus says that it was called *elops* by “Aristotle and all the naturalists and Aristophanes the Byzantine,” but that “Romans call it *aquipenser*,” with reference to “Cornelius Nepos and the poet Laberius, both Romans.” The “Greeks” thus means the authors writing in Greek, whereas the “Romans” are those who wrote in Latin. Likewise, when Lydus talks about the origin and meanings of months’ names in ancient Rome, and refers to his sources as “Roman histories,” he implies texts written in Latin.<sup>40</sup>

Just as Lydus divides “Greek” and “Roman” authors on the basis of their language, he often contrasts “Roman speech” (as another way of expressing “as the Romans say”)<sup>41</sup> and “their native language”<sup>42</sup> with “our” or “Hellenic speech.”<sup>43</sup> Lydus finds it necessary to explain Roman words and concepts to his readers: while going through Roman institutions, he declares that “it seems to me to be fitting at this point to explain the term *dictator* to the Greeks,” whereas elsewhere he points out that the “Greeks called the *censores* by way of translation *τιμηταί*” and that *nepos* meant a “lad,” according to Greek etymology (ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς ἐτυμολογίας).<sup>44</sup> Lydus’s explanations cover a whole array of words (which he mentions either in singular or in plural), such as *regium* (“tyranny”), *principes* (“the supreme head of the entire state”), *Quirinus* (“*kyrios*”), *toga* (“covering”), *paratura* (“distinctive dress”), *vexilla* (“long spears with clothes suspended from them”), *glubae* (“hides”), *excubitores* (“vigilant guards”), *conscripti* (“enrolled”), *legiones* (“picked”), *campus* (“the plain”), *clientes* (“respecting and loving [them]”), *pontifices* (“sacristan pontiffs”), and many more—including the word “Caesar” (“supreme commander” and “emperor of the Romans”) and literary terms (“the

40 Lyd. *De mag.* 1.47, 3.63; *De mens.* 2.1.

41 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.12, 4.47, 4.169; *De mag.* 3.29.

42 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.30, 3.10, 4.102, 4.112; *De mag.* 1.32, 1.42, 1.46, 1.50, 2.3, 2.12, 2.13, 2.30, 3.2, 3.7, 3.8.

43 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 4.30, 4.33, 4.34; *De mag.* 1.9 and 1.10, 1.12 and 1.21 (the unification of the Romans and the Sabines). Cf. his references to those “who write in both languages”: e.g., *De mag.* 1.35 (ὡς εἶρηται τοῖς συγγραφεῦσιν ἑκατέρας φωνῆς). Lydus also occasionally contrasted “Roman” words (and names) with those in other languages: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 1.21 and 1.22 (the language of the Sabines).

44 Lyd. *De mag.* 1.36, 1.39, and 1.42.

verses of what is called a *famosum* by the Romans but *blasphemia* by us").<sup>45</sup>

Not surprisingly, Lydus goes beyond linguistic details into other differences between the "Romans" and the "Greeks." His *On Months* points to the different interpretations of the meaning of "April" by the Romans and the Greeks, and the collective opinions of Aristotle, Heraclites, and Pytheas from Massalia on the nature of tides and ebbs of the sea, before declaring that "the philosophers among the Romans share the same view" (τὸ αὐτὸ δὲ καὶ οἱ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις φιλοσοφούντες). A few chapters later, Lydus shows that the flooding of the Nile had been interpreted differently by the "Greeks" (Anaxagoras, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) and the "Romans" (here Lydus adduces the opinion of Seneca as "the greatest of Roman philosophers").<sup>46</sup> The "Greeks" and the "Romans" also organized their calendars in different ways. According to Lydus, the year of the "Romans" started in March, because "Aphrodite is the protector (ἑφορός) of the Romans," or on the eighth day of January, whereas the "Greeks" began their year on the twenty-fifth of December.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, Lydus says that the "Greeks" held June 23rd to be the beginning of their year, whereas the "Romans" had three beginnings, depending on whether one was considering the sacred (which started in January), ancestral (from March), or civic (from September) year.<sup>48</sup> The calendar's organization determined the arrangement of festal days. Here, too, the "Romans" and "Greeks" were distinct: the former had a special celebration of the kalends on the first day of each month, which was only the "new moon" for the "Greeks," and then another celebration of the nones and of the ides.<sup>49</sup> The "Romans" and "Greeks" differed in other areas, such as diet (they ate different things at different times of the

year) and modes of behavior.<sup>50</sup> In their religious life, too, they offered different types of veneration at different times.<sup>51</sup> Not only did the deities of the "Romans" and "Greeks" have different names, but each side also had specific deities—such as the Roman Janus, for whom Lydus finds no Greek counterpart—or peculiarities (for example, the Greeks represented Fate as a bull and Hermes as a square).<sup>52</sup>

Thus, Lydus's linguistic explanations were only one aspect of many in the overall cultural divide between the "Romans" and the "Greeks," ranging from astronomical contemplations and details of their calendars to particular geographical observations. This manner of applying "Roman" and "Greek" was far from unique to Lydus: his contemporaries used the same approach. In Byzantium, Agathias provided explanations of Latin terms, with reference as to why the "Romans" called certain officials *a cancellis* and *curatores*, thus indicating that his "Romans" were also Latin-speakers.<sup>53</sup> Malalas used "Roman" throughout his text to designate authors writing in Latin.<sup>54</sup> George the Syncellus, too, distinguished sources written by "Romans" and "Greeks."<sup>55</sup> These authors were writing for a Greek audience and, thus, translated Latin words

45 Lyd. *De mag.* 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.16, 1.17, 1.20, and 1.35; 1.4 and 2.9 (τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεύς), and 3.46. For other explanations of Roman concepts, see Lyd. *De mens.* 1.4, 1.18, 1.21, 1.30, 3.9, 3.10, 4.1, 4.9, 4.10, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.34, 4.43, 4.51, 4.72, 4.102, 4.121.

46 Lyd. *De mag.* 1.47 and 1.63; *De mens.* 4.64, 4.83, and 4.107.

47 Lyd. *De mens.* 3.7 and 4.1, 3.17.

48 Lyd. *De mens.* 3.22 (τοῖς δὲ Ῥωμαίοις τρεῖς· μία μὲν ἱερατική, ἑτέρα δὲ πάτριος, ἡ δὲ ἄλλη κυκλικὴ καὶ πολιτική).

49 Lyd. *De mens.* 3.10 (παρὰ μὲν Ῥωμαίοις Καλένδαι, παρὰ δὲ Ἑλλήσι Νεομηνία) and 3.13. The Roman celebration: *De mens.* 3.11, 3.13, 4.3, 4.80.

50 Diet: e.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 3.11, 3.13, 4.42, 4.80, 4.135, 4.158. Behavior: e.g., *De mens.* 4.57, 4.65, 4.67, 4.89, 4.106.

51 Lyd. *De mens.* 4.10, 4.25, 4.29, 4.49, 4.72, 4.76, 4.82, 4.94.

52 Names: e.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 4.51, 4.64, 4.75 with 4.30. Janus: *De mens.* 4.2. Forms: *De mens.* 4.46 and 4.76.

53 E.g., Agath. 1.19.4 (τούτους δὲ ἔθος Ῥωμαίοις ἐκ τῶν κιγκλίδων ἐπονομάζειν) and 5.3.10 (κουράτωρας δὲ τούτους καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι). Cf. Lyd. *De mag.* 3.37 (κάγκελλον αὐτὸ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καλοῦσιν).

54 E.g., Malal. *Chron.* 6.19: Βεργίλλιος ὁ σοφὸς Ῥωμαίων ποιητῆς and Σέρβιος ὁ Ῥωμαῖος (126 Thurn), 7.6: Πλίνιος ὁ Ῥωμαίων ιστοριογράφος (137 Thurn), 7.7: Αἰκίνιος ὁ Ῥωμαίων χρονογράφος (138 Thurn), 7.9: Σέρβιος ὁ Ῥωμαίων συγγραφεὺς (139 Thurn), 7.12: Ἐκθεσις Βρουνιχίου Ῥωμαίου χρονογράφου (143 Thurn), 8.27: Εὐτρόπιος ὁ συγγραφεὺς Ῥωμαίων (158 Thurn), 9.2: Λίβιος ὁ σοφὸς Ῥωμαίων ὑπῆρχεν ἱστορικός, δς ἐξέθετο πολλὰ περὶ Ῥωμαίων (162 Thurn).

55 E.g., Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A. A. Mosshammer (Leipzig, 1984), 375.1–2: ὡς ἐν τισὶ Ῥωμαϊκαῖς ἐκδόσεσιν ἐμφέρεται ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ περὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἕως Αὐγούστου χρόνων κτλ., interpreted by A. A. Mosshammer, "Roman History According to George the Syncellus," in *Dissertatiunculae criticae: Festschrift für G. C. Hansen*, ed. C.-F. Collatz et al. (Würzburg, 1998), 393 as "a Latin epitome or a Greek translation of one"; and 418.18–20, where he attributed the story of Domitian's responsibility for the death of his brother to "the Greeks" (ὡς δὲ Ἕλληνες ἱστοροῦσι, φαρμάκῳ Δομετιανὸς αὐτὸν ἀνείλεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἔρωτι τῆς μοναρχίας).

into Greek, just as they did words from other languages.<sup>56</sup> And when Lydus was offering (and using) “translations” (καθ’ ἑρμηνείαν or πρὸς ἑρμηνείαν), he meant translations into Greek.<sup>57</sup>

It could well be that some sixth-century authors, such as Count Marcellinus, wrote their works for the Latin-speaking community of Constantinople or the East in general,<sup>58</sup> just as Ammianus had done two centuries earlier, when East and West also formed parts of the Roman empire. Ammianus frequently translates Greek words and phrases (not surprisingly, they are found mostly in those parts of his *Res gestae* that deal with matters of learning and education),<sup>59</sup> thus illustrating that “even in the fourth century, the Greek literature of the East and the Latin literature of the West had been largely distinct.”<sup>60</sup> Count Marcellinus refers to the coins of Anastasius, which the Romans called *terunciani* and the Greeks *follores*. He also extols Jerome, who not only translated into Latin a treatise that Eusebius had composed in Greek, and continued it in the “Roman speech” (*Romano eloquio*), but also turned all the books of the Old Testament into Latin and translated other works into the “Roman language” (*Romanam linguam*).<sup>61</sup> But even if these, and some other, sources show the presence of a certain number of Latin speakers in the east, these sources also demonstrate a cultural divide between the “Romans” and the “Greeks.” Even the imperial elite, i.e., Justinian’s administrators, were not likely to know any Latin

beyond what was required by their professional responsibilities.<sup>62</sup> Quite naturally, therefore, after the publication of the *Codex Iustinianus*, which was mostly in Latin, the emperor brought out a Greek translation and subsequently issued laws in Greek for the eastern portion of his empire and in Latin for the western, Latin-speaking provinces. These were published a few years later as the *Novellae constitutiones*.<sup>63</sup>

On the western side of the Mediterranean, contemporary Latin-speaking authors occupied a similar stance. In matters of politics, Cassiodorus (ca. 487–ca. 580)<sup>64</sup> and Gregory of Tours (ca. 540–593/94)<sup>65</sup> still saw the Roman empire as one entity. They understood that both ancient Romans and their contemporaries—those people of the fifth and sixth century who did not belong to the barbarians—were “Romans.” Yet, when it came to cultural identity, Gregory also characterized the Byzantines as “Greeks,” by speaking of Latin as “our language” (*litterae nostrae*), while distinguishing the customs of the Greeks (*sicut Graeci habent*).<sup>66</sup> Boethius (ca. 480–ca. 524) developed the idea of translating all the works of Plato and Aristotle and other authors from Greek into Latin, to make them accessible to the Romans (*ut Graecorum dogmata doctrinam faceris esse Romanam*).<sup>67</sup> One does not have to believe Gregory the Great (pope, 590–604), when he declared himself to be ignorant of Greek, but he was, certainly, correct to observe that the Greek letters he received had to be translated into Latin, while those he wrote in Latin for

56 Cf., e.g., Greek translations for Turkish and Egyptian words by Theophylact Simocatta: *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig, 1887), 7.9.2 and 7.17.8, respectively.

57 E.g., Lyd. *De ost.* 10a (Campestris), 27 tit. (Figulus), 39 tit. (Fonteius), 42 tit. (Labeo), 54 (Vitellius), 59 tit. (Clodius Tuscus), and *De mag.* 1.14 (Aurelius), 1.26 and 1.34 (Gaius), 1.50 (Paulus), and 3.12 and 3.20.

58 B. Croke, *Count Marcellinus and His Chronicle* (Oxford and New York, 2001), 21, 43, 177, 179, 213–14 (also on his use of documents in Greek); Treadgold, *Historians* (n. 26 above), 227.

59 Amm. Marcell. 14.11.18, 20.3.9, 20.3.11, 22.8.45, 22.9.7, etc. See H. T. Rowell, “Ammianus Marcellinus, Soldier-Historian of the Late Roman Empire,” in *Lectures in Memory of Louise Taft Semple: First Series, 1961–1965* (Princeton and London, 1967), 291; D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London and New York, 2002), 14, 26.

60 Treadgold, *Historians*, 234.

61 Marcell., *Chronicon* (n. 12 above), 95: *quos Romani Terentianos vocant, Graeci follores* (s.a. 498), and 60 (praef.) and 63 (s.a. 392), respectively.

62 E.g., E. M. Jeffreys, “The Attitudes of Byzantine Chroniclers towards Ancient History,” *Byzantion* 49 (1979): 220–21 (on Malalas); L. M. Whitby, “Theophylact’s Knowledge of Languages,” *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 425–428; Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire* (n. 1 above), 20–25; A. Markopoulos, “Roman Antiquarianism: Aspects of the Roman Past in the Middle Byzantine period: 9th–11th C.,” in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies: London, 21–26 August 2006* (Aldershot, 2006), 1:279–80 (with n. 25).

63 Rochette, *Le latin* (n. 3 above), 142.

64 The entire *imperium Romanum: Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH *AA* 12 (Berlin, 1894), 88.34. Ancient Romans: e.g., 103.11, 106.11. As opposed to “barbarians”: e.g., 91.14, 279.4 and 11, 286.6–7, 334.16 etc., including Goths: e.g., 91.24, 103.15, 135.21, 235.6, 257.20.

65 Ancient Romans: *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis libri Historiarum X*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH *ScriptRerMerov*<sup>2</sup> 1.1 (Hannover, 1951), 16.12, 28.1. As opposed to “barbarians”: 35.19, 53.1, 55.15, 58, 61.5 etc.

66 “The Greeks”: *ibid.*, 310.14 and 316.5. Latin: 254.3–4.

67 Cassiodorus, *Var.*, 40.7–8, and 11–14.



his Byzantine correspondents needed to be translated into Greek.<sup>68</sup> Jordanes (d. ca. 552) set “Greek histories” apart from “Latin histories” in the same way that Isidore, the bishop of Seville ca. 600–636, distinguished between *Graeci et Latini*, by dividing texts on the basis of their language.<sup>69</sup> Isidore’s *Graeci* were people who used the Greek language, or *sermo Graecus*, as opposed to Latin, irrespective of whether they lived in the seventh century B.C.E. or C.E.<sup>70</sup> Isidore, too, proceeded from a linguistic division between the “Greeks” and “Romans” to their many different perceptions, including their understandings of the philosophical concepts of matter and the origins of the circus horse races.<sup>71</sup>

It follows then that when the people of the sixth century, in Byzantium and in the west, contrasted “Roman” and “Greek” in cultural terms (first and foremost by their languages), the empire of Justinian fell into the second category. By their culture and education, the Byzantines were “Greeks,” as opposed to Latin-speakers, who were “Romans.”<sup>72</sup>



This stance, however, was profoundly transformed once the authors of the sixth century turned away from cultural matters to political history and reality. Politically, Lydus uses “Roman” in two ways. He applies it, first, as a designation for those who had lived in the Rome of the past, i.e., in the time of the kings, consuls, or emperors.<sup>73</sup> In *On Months*, he refers to the “Romans” when

describing the times of Fabius (4.157) and the reign of Domitian (1.26).<sup>74</sup> In a similar fashion, *On Powers* talks of the “Romans” when dealing with events in the times of Marius and Sulla (1.6); the civil war (2.3); and the reigns of Tiberius (3.57), Nero (3.34), Trajan (2.28), Diocletian (1.4), and Galerius (3.34). Aside from that, Lydus connects those ancient Romans and the Byzantines through various political, administrative, and social institutions of both times. Thus, he refers to the Roman state as “our state” when speaking about its organization in earlier times (by Romulus and others), or as “our side” when talking about past military conflicts and diplomatic negotiations, and he traces the origin of the Byzantine army to that of the Romans.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, therefore, he presents the city of Rome as the first reigning city and the “mother of (our) state,” and the city of Constantinople as “our Rome.”<sup>76</sup>

The second way Lydus uses “Roman” pertains to the politics of his day. He refers to his fellow Byzantines as “Romans,” differentiated from the “Persians,” “Gauls,” “Franks,” “Vandals,” “Goths,” “Scythians,” or simply “barbarians,”<sup>77</sup> because, in political terms, only the Byzantine empire was a continuation of the Roman state.<sup>78</sup> Hence, in the words of Lydus, when Byzantine forces defeated the Goths of Vitigis in Italy in the late 530s, Justinian both saved that territory from barbarian oppression and “restored what was Roman for Rome.” Procopius reflects a similar idea when, in describing the entrance of Belisarius’s forces into the city of Rome, he comments that “Rome again came under the control of

68 S. Gregorii Magni Registrum epistularum, ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140 (Turnhout, 1982), 1:7.29, 11.55, 10.10, 3.63.

69 Iordanis Romana et Getica, 54: ex nonnullis historiis Graecis et Latinis addidi convenientia. Isid. Etym. 13.15.1, 13.19.6 (*Genesar dicitur Graeco vocabulo*), 13.21.17 (*Orontem veteres Latine appellaverunt*), 14.3.15 (*hinc eam Graeci εὐδαίμων, nostri beatam nominaverunt*), 18.6.4 (*quoniam παθεῖν Graece dicitur pati; unde et patior et patitur dicimus*), etc.

70 The Greek language: e.g., Isid. Etym. 13.5.1, 13.18.6 (*quae Vergilius brevia appellat, Graeci βραχέα*) and Lyd. De mag. 1.10 (contrasting Roman and Greek designations for shields, and adducing evidence from Aristophanes).

71 Isid. Etym. 13.3.1 and 18.28.2.

72 K. Lechner, *Hellenen und Barbaren im Weltbild der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1954), 9: “Der Name Ἕλληνες . . . ist Bildungs- und Kulturbegriff.”

73 Kings: e.g., Lyd. De ost. 5; De mag. 1.3, 1.19, 1.31. Consuls: e.g., Lyd. De mag. 1.27, 1.36, 1.37, 1.38, 1.39, 1.42, 1.46. Emperors: e.g., Lyd. De mag. 1.4, 2.6.

74 E.g., Lyd. De mens. 1.4, 1.17, 1.27, 1.37, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7, 3.5, 3.9, 3.11, 3.13, 3.16, 4.1, 4.2, 4.25, 4.27, 4.47, 4.49, 4.59, 4.64, 4.102, 4.111, 4.169.

75 Lyd. De mag. 1.2–3, 2.23 (τὴν ἀρχέτυπον τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς πολιτείας ὁψιν). Ibid. 3.52: after the defeat of Julian, negotiations with the Persians were conducted by the prefect Sallust “on our side” (ἐξ ἡμῶν). Ibid. 1.12.

76 Ibid. 2.20 (οὐκ ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης, οὐκ ἐπὶ τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς βασιλίδος; cf. 2.30); 3.1 (καὶ αὐτῆς δὲ Ρώμης, τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων μητρὸς); 1.20 (τὴν καθ’ ἡμᾶς Ρώμην), 2.30 (τῆς ἡμετέρας Ρώμης).

77 The Persians: e.g., ibid. 3.33–34, 3.51, 3.55. Gauls and Franks: Lyd. De ost. 4; De mag. 1.50, 3.56. Vandals: Lyd. De mag. 2.2, 3.55. Goths: Lyd. De mag. 3.55, 3.56. Scythians: Lyd. De mag. 3.56. “Barbarians”: Lyd. De mag. 1.8, 3.1, 3.43, 3.55.

78 L. Bréhier, *Les institutions de l’Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1949), 12 (“A partir du V<sup>e</sup> siècle, l’expression de Romania, bien que sans valeur officielle, passa dans l’usage courant et fut employée jusqu’au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle”); H. Hunger, *Graeculus perfidus, Ἰταλὸς ἱταμός: Il senso dell’alterità nei rapporti greco-romani ed italo-bizantini* (Rome, 1987), 32.

the Romans.”<sup>79</sup> Speaking of the city of Rome as “the elder Rome,” Agathias similarly distinguishes between the Byzantines as “Romans” on the one hand, and the Goths, the Franks, or “barbarians” on the other.<sup>80</sup> While pointing to the city of Rome as “the elder Rome,” Simocatta contrasts the Byzantines as “Romans” to the Persians, the Armenians, the Iberians and others.<sup>81</sup> Malalas, too, opposes the Byzantines as “Romans” to the Huns and the Persians,<sup>82</sup> whereas *The Strategicon of Maurice* distinguishes between the Romans and the Persians, the Scythians, and the “foreigners.”<sup>83</sup> In the west, Popes Gregory the Great, Honorius (r. 625–638), and Sergius (r. 687–701) used dating by the regnal years of Roman emperors in Constantinople,<sup>84</sup> as did the Venerable Bede (ca. 672–735), who presents Byzantine rulers in a direct line of succession from Augustus, and who synchronizes his universal chronicle with their regnal years.<sup>85</sup> But even while Bede thinks of emperors in Constantinople as rulers of the “Roman empire,” he still believes that the “language of the Romans” was Latin.<sup>86</sup> In a similar fashion, Einhard (ca. 770–840) refers to Byzantine emperors as “Roman emperors” but to Byzantines as “Greeks.”<sup>87</sup>

79 Lyd. *De mag.* 3.1 and 3.55 (τῇ δὲ Ῥώμῃ τὰ Ῥώμης ἀπέσωσεν); Procop., *Wars* 5.14.14 (Ῥώμῃ τε αὐθις ἐξήκοντα ἔτεσιν ὑστερον ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίους γέγονεν).

80 “The elder Rome”: Agath. 5.6.5. The Goths: e.g., 1.5.3–4, 1.8.1. Franks: 1.15.5–9. “Barbarians”: 5.21.1.

81 Rome: e.g., Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 3.4.8, 8.11.9; the “Romans”: 3.12.9, 3.15.11, 3.17.2.

82 The Huns: Malal. *Chron.* 18.14 (361–62 Thurn), 18.21 (366 Thurn); the Persians: Malal. *Chron.* 18.4 (355–56 Thurn), 18.13 (360 Thurn), 18.26 (368 Thurn).

83 The Persians: *Das Strategikon des Maurikios* (n. 3 above), 74 (1.1); the Scythians: 250 (7B.11); the “foreigners” (ἐθνικοί): 18 (1.2), 258 (7B.15).

84 Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 114 (at 1.22), 198 (at 2.18), 472 (at 5.7; see next note).

85 E.g., *ibid.*, 44 (at 1.13): *Theodosius junior post Honorium quadragesimus quintus ab Augusto regnum suscipiens*; 68 (at 1.23): *Mauricius ab Augusto quinquagesimus quartus imperium suscipiens*; 472 (at 5.7): *imperante domno Iustiniano piissimo Aug. an. et cons. IIII, pontificante apostolico viro domno Sergio papa an. secundo*.

86 *Ibid.*, 116 (at 1.34): *anno Focatis* (i.e., Phocas), *qui tum Romani regni apicem tenebat, primo* and 220 (at 3.4): *quo tempore gubernaculum Romani imperii post Iustinianum Iustinus minor accepit*. *Ibid.*, 192 (at 2.16): *quod Romani tufam, Angli appellant thuuf*. On Latin as opposed to Greek: *ibid.*, 216 (at 3.2), 328 (at 4.1), 330 (at 4.1), 334 (at 4.2), 374 (at 4.13), 530 (at 5.20), 556 (at 5.23).

87 Einhard, *Vita Caroli Magni*, ed. G. H. Pertz and G. Waitz,

The two ways Lydus and his contemporaries used the term “Roman” were closely interconnected. Tracing the origin of the Byzantine state to ancient Rome allowed these authors to juxtapose the Byzantines as “Romans,” in political terms, to all other nations. The claim of being successors to the Romans justified Byzantine political pretensions. Procopius praised Justinian for restoring the city of Rome back to the Romans. In Lydus’s mind, Justinian, because he was emperor of the Romans, “restored what was Roman for Rome” by defeating the Goths of Vitigis. Agathias likewise qualified Justinian’s subjugation of Africa and Italy as an effort “of the rulers of Byzantium to be emperors of the Romans in fact as well as in name.”<sup>88</sup> It could well be that such references reflected Justinianic or imperial propaganda, which concealed Byzantine imperialism.<sup>89</sup> But the idea of the fall of the Roman empire in the west engendered the vision of the eastern empire with the capital in Constantinople, which thus emerged already before the reign of Justinian, the earliest surviving reference to it being the *Chronicle of Count Marcellinus*, whose original version is dated to ca. 518–19.<sup>90</sup> Similar views about the fate of the Roman empire in the west were likely expressed by Isidore and Malchus in the 520s, thus implying that such views were developed not in the west but by the “Romans of New Rome.”<sup>91</sup> This evidence suggests that the reconquests of

4th ed., MGH *ScriptRerGerm* 25 (Hannover, 1880), 32 (chap. 28) and 20 (chap. 16).

88 Justinian: Procop., *Wars* 5.14.14; Lyd. *De mag.* 3.55 (for both, see n. 79 above); cf. a similar attitude in the much later *Romance of Belisarius* (generally dated to the late fourteenth century), in *Ιστορία τοῦ Βελισσαρίου*, ed. W. F. Bakker and A. F. van Gemert (Athens, 1988), 152, line 235: καὶ πάλιν ἀπεδίδοντο Ῥωμαίοις τὰ Ῥωμαίων. Agath. 5.14.1 (ὡς εἶπεν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὸ Βυζάντιον βεβασίλευκόσι Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτωρ ὀνόματι τε καὶ πράγματι ἀπεδέδεικτο).

89 E.g., C. F. Pazdernik, “Procopius and Thucydides on the Labors of War: Belisarius and Brasidas in the Field,” *TAPA* 130 (2000): 159, 170; Rodolfi, “Procopius and the Vandals” (n. 9 above), 242.

90 Marcell., *Chronicon* (n. 12 above), 91: *Hesperium Romanae gentis imperium, quod septingentesimo nono urbis conditae anno primus Augustorum Octavianus Augustus tenere coepit, cum hoc Augustulo periit, anno decessorum regni imperatorum quingentesimo vigesimo secundo, Gothorum dehinc regibus Romam tenentibus* (s.a. 476); B. Croke, “A.D. 476: The Manufacture of a Turning Point,” *Chiron* 13 (1983): 86; see also 89: Marcellinus “seems to take the eastern empire for granted but has to particularise the western by a variety of designations; and on the occasions he identifies himself as Roman it is as an East Roman.”

91 Croke, “Turning Point,” 116 and 119.

Justinian had been ideologically endorsed even before they actually took place. It is hardly accidental that the earliest attested literary references to Constantinople as the new Rome were those by Paul the Silentiary in the reign of Justinian,<sup>92</sup> and then by Corippus in the epic eulogy on Justin II (r. 565–578), Justinian's nephew and successor.<sup>93</sup> References by Agathias and Simocatta to the city of Rome as the “elder Rome” and by Lydus as the “first reigning city” and the “mother of (our) state,” and Lydus's praise of Constantinople as “our Rome,” therefore, reflected the overall cultural and political context of the sixth century.<sup>94</sup>

Still, although the Byzantines of the sixth century were “Romans” in political terms and, therefore, laid claim to the Roman imperial inheritance (and, consequently, to the reconquest of the entire former Roman empire), they were “Greeks” in cultural terms, as opposed to the Latin-speaking Romans. Justinian's empire thus faced a dichotomy between its cultural and political identities. Menander Protector describes an “eternal treaty” established between the Byzantines and the Persians in 532 as “written out in Persian and Greek, and the Greek copy was translated into Persian and the Persian into Greek,” adding that “[F]or the Romans the documents were validated by Peter the master of the offices, Eusebius and others, for the Persians by the Zikh Yesdegusnaph, the Surenas and others.”<sup>95</sup> Procopius illustrates a similar situation, when he mentions how the Goths addressed the Byzantine army as “Romans” during the official negotiations; but when asking the people of Rome for their help during the siege of that city in 538, the Goths spoke of the Byzantines as “Greeks.”<sup>96</sup> Evagrius (in the late 6th century) and Simocatta (in the early

7th century) reflected on the same situation when they narrated the story about the Persian king Chosroes II (r. 590–628) restoring a gem-studded cross made of gold to Byzantine Sergiopolis. Although this cross had been captured by the Persians during their attack on Byzantium as the “Roman state” (*Romania*), which happened at the moment when Justinian I was holding the “Roman scepters,” Chosroes II corresponded with the Byzantines in Greek.<sup>97</sup> All these examples show that in political terms Byzantium was the Roman empire, but in cultural terms (including the language used for communication) Byzantium belonged to Greek civilization.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Byzantine “double identity”—political (“Roman”) and cultural (“Greek”)—affected the perceptions of both Byzantine culture and its relationship with other cultures. This is why Lydus applied the term “Italian” to people who lived in the western Mediterranean. Although these people spoke Latin, they were not politically Romans; and the Byzantines denied them the right to the Roman political inheritance.<sup>98</sup> Hence Lydus refers to “Marcus Flavius” as an “Italian (grammarian),” just as Agathias calls Asinius Quadratus “an Italian, who wrote an accurate account of German affairs,” and speaks of the affairs of “the Italians and the Franks.” Lydus similarly holds the Latin words *regium* and *imperare* as used by the “Italians,” and observes that at least some of the Libyans were considered to have mastered “Italic speech” better than the “Italians.”<sup>99</sup> According to Procopius, whereas the Neapolitans were referred to as “Romans” in their negotiations with Belisarius, Totila qualified them as “Italians,” which was a more appropriate definition in the eyes of the Byzantines.<sup>100</sup> The people of Tibur were also “Italians,” as were all other residents of Italy, except for the people of the city of Rome: but for these people, the word

92 See in *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius: Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit*, ed. P. Friedländer (Leipzig, 1912), 231, lines 164–65 (καὶ σὺ δὲ πρεσβυγένηθε Λατινίας ἔρχεο Ῥώμη, σύνθροον αἰδέουσα μέλος νεοθηλεί Ῥώμη). See also Lyd. *De mag.* 1.20, 2.30 (see n. 76 above).

93 Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, ed. I. Partsch, MGH *AA* 3.2 (Berlin, 1879), 126 (1.344); see also 141 (3.156), 143 (3.247), and 151 (4.138–41), with F. Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Ettal, 1953), 95; W. Hammer, “The Concept of the New and Second Rome in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 19 (1944): 52–53.

94 See discussion above, 35.

95 Blockley, ed., *Menander the Guardsman* (n. 2 above), 97, frag. 6.1 (trans. Blockley).

96 Procop., *Wars* 6.6.14–15, 5.18.40.

97 *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898), 6.21 (235.18–238.12); Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 5.13.2–4, 5.14.1.

98 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.13, 1.32, 4.157, 4.174; *De ost.* 16; *De mag.* 1.3, 1.4, 1.11, 1.16, 1.30, 1.47, 1.50, 2.4, 2.7, 2.16, 2.20 (education), 2.27, 3.7, 3.11, 3.20, 3.49, 3.59, 3.68, 3.73.

99 Lyd. *De mag.* 1.3 and 1.4, 3.73.

100 Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8 (see n. 107 below; cf. *De ost.* 3); Agath. 1.6.3 and 2.14.11 (τὰ Ἰταλιωτῶν καὶ Φράγγων πράγματα). For this Asinius Quadratus, see *FGrHist* 97. Procop., *Wars* 5.8.7, 5.9.27, and 7.7.12 (see n. 24 above).

“Romans” was used only to indicate their place of residence.<sup>101</sup> In much later times, Constantine VII and Nicetas Choniates provided similar references.<sup>102</sup> All these authors used the designation “Italians” instead of “Romans” as another display of the close connection between cultural and political perceptions: in political terms, only the Byzantines were “Romans.”<sup>103</sup>

One consequence of their double identity was that the Byzantines could search for their cultural roots in pre-Roman and non-Roman settings, thus disconnecting themselves from Roman civilization. We have already seen that Lydus’s descriptions of Byzantine social customs, scholarly views, religious rites, and calendar goes beyond the limits of Roman civilization. Thus, when discussing the art of divination, Lydus mentions Tages, whose teachings laid the foundation of this art for those who originated from Italy.<sup>104</sup> He also narrates how Euander had taught the Greek speech (τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνήν) to the Italians long before the foundation of Rome, so that Romulus would not be ignorant of this speech.<sup>105</sup> The profound Greek influence

on pre-Roman and Roman Italy in state administration, language, customs, and religion justified the use of Greek in Byzantine state administration in Lydus’s own day. Likewise, his use of “Italian” reflected the same dichotomy between the cultural and the political identities of the Byzantines: while claiming to be the only “Romans” in political terms, they clung to Greek culture because it was superior to Roman.<sup>106</sup>

Consequently Lydus also points to many aspects of Byzantium’s superiority over Rome. In particular, by distinguishing between the Greek and Roman cultural worlds, he ascribes many attributes of Roman civilization to Greeks: in Lydus’s words, the Romans followed the Greeks in their laws and state organization, learning, customs, and even the use of letters.<sup>107</sup> He praises ancient Greek cultural figures (Solon, Demosthenes) for having influenced not just the Greeks but the Romans as well.<sup>108</sup> This situation was nothing new: Greek intellectuals of the early empire displayed, for various reasons, a similar interest in the pre-Roman Greek past, distinguishing between their civilization and that of the Romans, thus asserting their cultural superiority on the basis of such knowledge.<sup>109</sup> This is what Ammianus likely meant in the fourth century, when he referred to himself as a *miles quondam et Graecus*: in the Roman empire, learning and education were the domains of the Greeks, unlike politics and warfare.<sup>110</sup> But once the west fell to the barbarians,

101 Tibur: Procop., *Wars* 7.10.21. See also, e.g., 2.3.42, 6.25.5, 7.30.24, 7.35.9, 8.26.20; *Secr. Hist.* 5.4, 5.17, 24.9.

102 Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik (Washington, DC, 1967), 23.23–24 (γραμματική δὲ χρώνται τῇ τῶν Ἰταλῶν οἱ παρὰ θάλατταν οἰκοῦντες τῶν Ἰβήρων); *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. L. Van Dieten (Berlin, 1975), 300.95 (γλώττης Ἰταλιώτιδος).

103 An interesting example of a similar attitude from much later times is documented in S.-R.-N. Chamfort, *Maximes et pensées: Caractères et anecdotes*, ed. J. Dagen (Paris, 1968), 265 (no. 956): “Duclos disait, pour pas profaner le nom de Romain, en parlant des Romains modernes: *Un Italien de Rome*.”

104 Lyd. *De ost.* 2 (ἡμῖν, τοὺς ἐξ Ἰταλίας φημί, Τάγης ἀρχηγὸς τοῦ πράγματος γέγονεν).

105 Euander: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8 and *De mag.* 1.5. Romulus: Lyd. *De mag.* 1.5 = Cato *Orig.* 1.1 (*Historicorum Romanorum reliquiae*, ed. H. Peter [Leipzig, 1914], frag. 19, and *Les origines (fragments)*, ed. M. Chassignet [Paris, 1986], frag. 19), which is considered to be Lydus’s only indication that Romulus was not ignorant of the Aeolic Greek speech: Chassignet, *Les origines*, 17, ad loc. and B. Rochette, “Jean le Lydien, Caton, Varron et Servius,” *BZ* 91 (1998): 473. But Lydus also implied this in *De mens.* 4.33. Greek influence on pre-Roman Italians: E. Gabba, “Il latino come dialetto greco,” in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di A. Rostagni* (Turin, 1963), 191–94. Greek grammarians traced the origin of Latin to Aeolian: see W. A. Schröder, *M. Porcius Cato: Das erste Buch der Origines; Ausgabe und Erklärung der Fragmente* (Meisenheim/Glan, 1971), 176–178; Rochette, *Le latin* (n. 3 above), 228 with n. 79. For such theories in antiquity: Gabba, “Il latino come dialetto greco,” 188–94; J. Werner, “Περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς διαλέκτου ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς

ἑλληνικῆς,” in *Griechenland und Rom: Vergleichende Untersuchungen*, ed. E. G. Schmidt (Erlangen and Jena, 1996), 323–33.

106 Esp. A. Momigliano, *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1960), 198–201; Hunger, *Graeculus perfidus* (n. 78 above), 33.

107 Laws and state organization: Lyd. *De mag.* 1.34 and 47; learning: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.34; customs: 4.15, 4.56, 4.155; the use of letters: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8 (Μάρκος Φλάβιος, γραμματιστῆς Ἰταλός, τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἀκολουθήσας, τὰ λοιπὰ στοιχεῖα τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐπέγραψεν).

108 Solon: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 1.47 (the social arrangement established by Solon in Athens was then borrowed by the Romans). Demosthenes: e.g., *ibid.* 3.42.

109 E.g., G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969); E. L. Bowie, “Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic,” *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 3–41; and *idem*, “The Importance of Sophists,” *YCS* 27 (1982): 29–59.

110 Amm. Marcell. 31.16.9. See Rowell, “Ammianus Marcellinus” (n. 59 above), 291–94; J. de Boeft, “Ammianus graecissans?” in *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. *idem et al.* (Amsterdam and New York, 1992), 13; Rohrbacher, *Historians* (n. 59 above), who examined the meaning

the cultural identity of Byzantium had to reflect the political claims of the Byzantines. According to Lydus, Justinian's virtues were more profound than those of Roman emperors, for he "did not only emulate Trajan in his military exploits, but he surpassed Augustus himself in his piety toward God and moderation of manners, Titus in the nobility of his soul, and Marcus in his sagacity." The last phrase looks as if taken from one of the late Roman imperial panegyricists, who often compared their addressees with the "good emperors" of the second century.<sup>111</sup> However, Lydus's words extol more than Justinian.<sup>112</sup> Lydus thought the entire Byzantine empire had excelled its Roman predecessor. Hence Constantinople, or "our Rome" (in Lydus's words), "eclipsed the power of the first (Rome)."<sup>113</sup> He felt that the Byzantines had proved themselves stronger because, "whereas formerly the Romans possessed only Italy, now, however, they have control of both every land and sea alike."<sup>114</sup> In addition to territorial gains, Justinian restored ancient institutions that had long been in decay, and made laws clear as never before.<sup>115</sup> The two policies went hand in hand: Lydus's praise of Justinian's legislation and his favorable comparison of Justinian with earlier Roman emperors simultaneously asserted that Byzantium was a continuation of the Roman empire and, by extension, justified Justinian's campaigns as a policy of restoration of the Roman empire. The use of Latin in Byzantium was never merely a display of Latin culture:<sup>116</sup> the cultural pre-

tensions of the Byzantines would be closely associated with their political claims even centuries later.<sup>117</sup> For Lydus and his Byzantine contemporaries, the Byzantine empire not only continued the Roman state but even surpassed it, because the Greek cultural inheritance of the Byzantines made them superior to the Romans.

The double identity of Justinianic Byzantium also made the diverse use of the terms "Roman" (Ῥωμαῖος) and "Greek" (Ἕλληγ) possible. These words not only defined works written in Latin and Greek, respectively—thus reflecting the cultural aspects of the political separation between the two parts of the once whole Roman empire, as seen above—but also the status of the Byzantines, who were simultaneously Romans and Greeks.<sup>118</sup> However, the antithesis of "Roman" and "Greek" was not always strictly cultural, since, like earlier Christian texts, Byzantine sources in the first several centuries after the foundation of Constantinople, and even in later times, frequently use "Greek" as a designation for pagans.<sup>119</sup> Thus, "Roman" and "Greek" also pertained to different spheres: the former related to Roman law and state administration, whereas the latter concerned social and communal life, as opposed to the state machinery, i.e., Byzantine statehood. From this point of view, pagans (Ἕλληνες) were legal outcasts in the Byzantine Roman state: once it turned out that a prospective bride of Theodosius II (r. 408–450) was a pagan (Ἕλληγ), she had to convert to Christianity so that a legal marriage

of *Graecus* in connection with "Ammianus' blending of Greek and Latin culture throughout his work."

111 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.28. See S. Dmitriev, "Good Emperors' and Emperors of the Third Century," *Hermes* 132 (2004): 211–24.

112 Whether Lydus was praising Justinian or was secretly criticizing his policies has no impact on the observations in this article, which examines Lydus's texts as sources on cultures and identities of Justinianic Byzantium. For Lydus's alleged criticism of Justinian: e.g., Cameron, *Procopius* (n. 28 above), 250–53; Maas, *John Lydus* (n. 27 above); Dubuisson, "Jean le Lydien et les formes de pouvoir" (n. 30 above): 55–72; J. Vanderspoel, in *BMCR* 1992 (03.03.10); Kaldellis, "Republican Theory" (n. 30 above), 1–16; Pazdernik, "Justinianic Ideology" (n. 30 above), 194–98.

113 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.30 (τῆς δὲ ἡμετέρας Ῥώμης τὴν πρῶτην τῆς δυνάμεως ἀποκρυπτούσης).

114 Ibid. 2.24.

115 Ibid. 3.1 and 3.55.

116 E.g., G. Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: langue de culture et langue d'État," [repr. in G. Dagron, *La romanité chrétienne en Orient* (London, 1984), chap. 1] *Revue historique*

241–42 (1969): 42 on "la pérennité d'une certaine culture latine comme composante de la civilisation byzantine" and "l'usage du grec comme langue de l'Empire."

117 Cf. Jeffreys, "Byzantine Chroniclers" (n. 62 above), 235: in Prodhon's writings about the victories of John and Manuel Comnenus, "Old Rome is called in with increasing frequency to provide both a contrast to the vigour of the New Rome that is Constantinople, and a goal for its expansion."

118 See esp. Dagron, "Aux origines" (n. 116 above), 23–29, 34–35, not on the division between the "east" and the "west," but between Greek and Roman civilizations.

119 E.g., *Chronicon Paschale*, vol. 1–2, ed. L. A. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), 595 (s.a. 467); Procop., *Wars* 1.19.35, 1.20.1 and 1.25.10 (ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ δόξα), *Secr. Hist.* 11.31; Malal. *Chron.* 17.9: τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων δόγμα (340 Thurn). See, e.g., Lechner, *Hellenen und Barbaren* (n. 72 above), 41–46; Bréhier, *Institutions* (n. 78 above), 13; R. Browning, *Greece—Ancient and Medieval* (London, 1966), 15; Hunger, *Graeculus perfidus* (n. 78 above), 32; Koder, "Byzantinische Identität" (n. 25 above), 3–4; C. Rapp, "Hellenic Identity, Romanitas, and Christianity in Byzantium," in *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. K. Zacharia (Aldershot and Burlington, 2008), 138.

could be contracted between them.<sup>120</sup> Justinian himself counted “Greeks” together with “Jews” and “Sodomites,” thus separating them all as outsiders in legal terms from the rest of the “Romans.”<sup>121</sup> Later Byzantine texts, such as *The Epanagoge*, distinguished “Greeks” as those who were not covered by regular laws and did not participate in the state.<sup>122</sup> Another corresponding meaning of “Ἕλλην” concerned the person’s ethnic background, as opposed to his statehood.<sup>123</sup> Thus, when talking about the nations that live around the Adriatic Sea, Procopius mentions “Greeks called Epirotes.” And when describing the attack of the Huns against the “Romans” in 539, he says that the barbarians “robbed the Illyrians and Thessalians” and “destroyed almost all the Ἕλληνες except the Peloponnesians.”<sup>124</sup> Here, the term “Romans” also defined their statehood, but from a different perspective, since in such cases the “Greeks” pertained not to their religious beliefs but their ethnic background.

The double identity of the Byzantines also affected the relationship between low and high cultures in Byzantium. These have generally been understood as reflecting the cultural priorities of peasants and potentates, who probably saw their Roman identity in different terms.<sup>125</sup> But “double identity” also meant that low and high culture acquired more than one definition. Lydus uses the word “Roman” as an antithesis to “the mob” (τὸ πλῆθος), “average people” (οἱ πολλοί),

and commoners in general.<sup>126</sup> In most cases it was their ignorance of Latin (and their misunderstanding of Latin terms or those derived from Latin) that marked them as commoners and set them apart from “the best people,” i.e., state officials like Lydus himself. Roman culture was thus the high culture in comparison with that of the commoners, who knew no Latin. But Lydus and his contemporaries, as we have seen above, also acknowledged Greek culture as being superior to that of the Romans or, in other words, as high culture. Being Roman and being Greek pertained to different aspects of one’s existence: the former referred to one’s being a part of the state (and, accordingly, belonging to the Christian faith), whereas the latter concerned one’s social status (which designated ethnic, religious, or cultural affiliation). The same person, therefore, could be both Roman and Greek, depending on the perspective adopted in the text. Hence, the Byzantine understanding of high and low culture turns out to have been flexible: either Greek or Roman culture could be high culture. But the relationship between high and low Greek culture was not strictly bipolar: it was one’s affinity with Roman culture that determined to which level of Greek culture he or she belonged.

“Roman,” “Greek,” and “Italian” thus appear to have had more than one meaning in Byzantine works of the sixth century. Depending on whether the context was cultural or political, such terms acquired different interpretations. Justinian’s contemporaries contemplated the Roman world from more than one perspective and, therefore, more than one frontier lay between the Roman world and their own empire. Being politically Roman and culturally Greek was not a problem for the Byzantines as long as Byzantium remained, or claimed to remain, the Roman state. The dichotomy between the cultural and the political, however, also concealed a potential danger, which Lydus demonstrates by relating a prophecy once given to Romulus, “Fortune would desert the Romans at that time when they forgot their ancestral language.” Lydus used this story—which he probably had made up—to illustrate the fall of the praetorian prefecture, by claiming that the prefects lost their power once one

120 Malal. *Chron.* 14.4 (273–75 Thurn); *Chron. Pasch.* (n. 119 above), 576.6, 577.22–578.8.

121 Ed. E. Schwartz, *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians* (Munich, 1939), 68.9–10 (Ἰουδαίων καὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Σοδομιτῶν καὶ πάντων τῶν αἰρετικῶν), 100.29, 104.2, and Rapp, “Hellenic Identity” (n. 119 above), 138.

122 E.g., *The Epanagoge* [= *Jus graecoromanum*, ed. P. Zepos and J. Zepos, vol. 2 (Athens, 1931)], 9.13: Ἕλληνες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ αἰρετικοὶ οὐτε στρατεύονται οὐτε πολιτεύονται, ἀλλ’ ἐσχάτως ἀτιμούνται (c.800).

123 E.g., A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge and New York, 2007), 184.

124 Procop., *Wars* 5.15.24 and 2.4.10–11, respectively; see also *Secr. Hist.* 26.30: the Greeks live in Greece, on the way from Constantinople to Italy. Cf. a similar approach in *Nicet. Chron. Hist.* (n. 102 above), 601.69–70: when Boniface courted the locals in 1204, καὶ Μακεδόνες τῷ τότε καὶ Θεσσαλοὶ καὶ ὅσα ἐς Ἑλλάδα καθήκουσιν ἀσμένως ἐδέχοντο.

125 E.g., P. Karlin-Hayter, “Appartenir à l’Empire,” in *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003), 117 and 119.

126 τὸ πλῆθος: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.13, 4.4, 4.64; *De mag.* 1.40, 2.4, 2.13, 2.14, 2.4, 3.2, 3.64. οἱ πολλοί: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.21, 1.29, 2.1, 4.47, 4.49, 4.67, 4.80; *De mag.* 3.9. In general: Lyd. *De mag.* 1.23 (οἱ ἰδιῶται), 2.9 (ὁ δῆμος).

of them, Cyrus (“the Egyptian”), began using Greek in official Byzantine documentation.<sup>127</sup> But those who, like him, distinguished between Greek and Roman works on the basis of their language could apply this prophecy to Justinian’s empire as a whole: the loss of Roman culture and, first and foremost, the language of the Romans, was equal to the loss of the Roman political inheritance. Hence, Lydus asserts that “the speech of the Romans was still dominating” in his time,<sup>128</sup> and that the Latin language was the language of authority for the Byzantines. He also notes that “there was an ancient law that all matters being transacted in any way whatsoever by the prefects, and perhaps by the other magistracies as well, be expressed in the words of the Italians (τοῖς Ἰταλῶν . . . ῥήμασιν).” Lydus used “the words of the Italians,” because this phrase combined the political and cultural aspects of Byzantine civilization: the Byzantines, culturally the “Greeks,” were expected to communicate in Latin, because they were politically “Romans,” even though Latin was also the language of “the Italians,” the Latin-speakers of the West. Hence Lydus does not refer to “the words of the Romans.” He reinforces this idea by saying that, according to this law and ancient custom, public officials in Byzantium use the “language of the Italians.”<sup>129</sup>

The most vicious act perpetrated by one of Justinian’s prefects, John the Cappadocian, as we read in the same passage, was, therefore, defined as conducting public business in a colloquial way (ὅπως πρόχειρα ὄντα καὶ κοινά), thus changing the former manner of public documentation into “some kind of base and mean narration (εἰς γραῶδη τινὰ καὶ χαμαιζήλον ἀπαγγελίαν).”<sup>130</sup> The adjective γραῶδης also means “in the fashion of the commoners” or, accordingly, “in the Greek fashion” (γραϊκός). Converting public documentation into Greek was, thus, an act of debasement and a departure from earlier times when the prefect himself had dictated verdicts in “dignified Roman words”;

officials strove to learn “the language of the Romans, because they needed it”; and Lydus was commended by Justinian for “having rendered by his own efforts the language of the Romans even more dignified.”<sup>131</sup> Lydus marks Latin as “the Roman language” because he means, in such cases, that it is the official language of Byzantium as the Roman empire, which best displayed the continuity between the ancient Roman empire and the empire of Justinian. Hence Justinianic documents label Latin the “paternal language” (πάτριος φωνή),<sup>132</sup> and although Lydus found it necessary to offer Greek translations of Latin words to his readers, he also calls Latin the “paternal language” (πάτριος φωνή).<sup>133</sup> The decline in the official use of Latin, therefore, had both political and cultural significance; it undermined the old foundation of state machinery and administration along with the old Roman civilization and culture.<sup>134</sup> This situation might also explain Procopius’s frequent references to the Byzantines speaking Greek as “the Romans using Greek expressions” (ἐλληνίζοντες . . . Ῥωμαῖοι): his “Romans” bore a political connotation, because it designated citizens of the Roman empire.<sup>135</sup>



The danger concealed in the dichotomy between Byzantium’s widening separation from Roman

127 Lyd. *De mens.* frag. 7 (4.169); *De mag.* 2.12 and 3.42 with Rochette, *Le latin* (n. 3 above), 138 (with n. 340). See *PLRE* 2:336–39; Fl. Taurus Seleucus Cyrus 7 (cos. 441) and Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 8.8.11–12.

128 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.13 (ἡ νῦν κρατοῦσα τῶν Ῥωμαίων φωνή).

129 Lyd. *De mag.* 3.68, esp. sect. 2: καίπερ Ἕλληνας ἐκ τοῦ πλείονος ὄντας, τῇ τῶν Ἰταλῶν φθέγγεσθαι φωνῇ, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς δημοσιεύοντας.

130 Ibid.

131 Lyd. *De mag.* 3.18 (ὕπηγόρευε Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὀγκῶν ῥημάτων τὸ σύνθημα), 3.27 (περὶ δὲ τὴν Ῥωμαίων φωνὴν τὸ πλεον ἔχειν ἐσπούδαζον), 3.29 (τὴν Ῥωμαίων φωνὴν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ πόνοις ἀποδείξει σεμνοτέραν).

132 Rochette, *Le latin* (n. 3 above), 142 (with nn. 352–53).

133 E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 4.33, 4.112, 4.158, 4.169; *De mag.* 1.50 (τῇ πατρίῳ Ῥωμαίων φωνῇ), 2.3, 2.12, 3.42. When Lydus merely provides his readers with translations, he uses the adverb πατρίως; *De mens.* 1.21, 1.30, 3.10, 3.22, 4.3, 4.64, 4.72, 4.76, 4.102, 4.106, 4.158; *De mag.* 1.20, 1.42, 1.46, 2.13, 2.14, 3.32. On the official use of Latin (on gold coins, in imperial panegyrics, etc.) in the sixth century and later, see A. Vasilikopoulou, “Ἡ ‘πάτριος’ φωνή,” in *Ἡ ἐπικοινωνία στὸ Βυζάντιο*, ed. N. G. Moschonas (Athens, 1993), 103–13.

134 Cf. Dagron, “Aux origines” (n. 116 above), 44 (with n. 7) on Latin as “la langue historique de l’Empire.” According to C. Kelly, “John Lydus and the Eastern Pretorian Prefecture,” *BZ* 98 (2005): 433, Lydus argues “for the continued significance of ancient Roman practices and traditions.”

135 Procop., *Wars* 2.29.25, 3.21.2, 3.21.4, 7.1.29; cf. 8.9.19. See his further references to Greek words and expressions: e.g., *Wars* 5.18.6, 8.11.36, 8.14.48.

culture (which would eventually serve as the basis of Byzantine nationalism)<sup>136</sup> and the continued pretension of Byzantium as the only political successor to the ancient Roman empire was still only a potential problem in the sixth century. The growing official use of Greek, which was marked by Lydus in the mid-sixth century, is thought to have started as early as the late fourth century;<sup>137</sup> therefore, John the Cappadocian was guilty only in the sense that he had continued what had begun long before his tenure as the praetorian prefect. But even after the emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641) finally established Greek as the language of the central administration,<sup>138</sup> the Byzantines continued to present themselves as “Romans” in political terms, which was acknowledged by the popes and rulers in the west.

The fluidity of Roman identity in late antiquity poses a problem because we cannot define “Romans” simply by opposing it to “barbarians.”<sup>139</sup> It appears that the “Romans” themselves could be defined in more than one way, at least from the Byzantine point of view. In cultural terms, they believed that “Roman”

designated a Latin-based civilization, as opposed to that of the Greeks, both in the past and concurrently, so that the Greek-speaking empire of Justinian did not belong to the Roman world. In political terms, however, the Byzantines unambiguously asserted that their empire was a continuation of the Roman state. Hence they called themselves “Romans,” in contrast to all other peoples, including those who spoke Latin. The Byzantines thus claimed to be both Greeks and Romans at the same time. As Greeks, they asserted their cultural superiority over the Romans, tracing their heritage to pre-Roman times. It would be an exaggeration, therefore, to claim that during that time Byzantium’s “Hellenic identity went into abeyance.”<sup>140</sup> As Romans, they laid claim to political dominance over the rest of the world. It was also clear, however, that being Roman and being Greek in Justinian’s empire had different meanings, depending on the context in which these words were used. The Byzantines’ double identity affected the culture of Justinianic Byzantium in many different ways, including the diverse uses of definitions (“Roman,” “Greek,” “Italian,” “Libyan,” and so on) and the variable perceptions of high and low cultures.

Department of History  
Burkhardt Building, room 200  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
dmitriev@bsu.edu

136 E.g., Jeffreys, “Byzantine Chroniclers” (n. 62 above), 238.

137 For the steps of this process, see esp. Dagron, “Aux origines” (n. 116 above), 36–46 and Rapp, “Hellenic Identity” (n. 119 above), 141.

138 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De thematibus*, ed. A. Pertusi (Vatican City, 1952), 60, pr., 24–25. See, e.g., W. Ohnsorge, in *Polychronion: Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Wirth (Heidelberg, 1966), 398; M. McCormick, “Byzantium and the West: 700–900,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1995), 2:351.

139 Kaldellis, “Classicism” (n. 15 above), 209.

140 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (n. 123 above), 173.